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User Interface Design Principles

User Interface is a very important factor when we design our application. It provides a mechanism for end users to interact with the application. Designing a good user interface which is easy to use an successful application. If you already know the target audience for your application then designing becomes simple as you will already be familiar with their needs and likes. Target audience, for example, can be the employee's of a firm. A well designed user interface makes it easy and simple for the user to understand and use. On the other hand, a poorly designed user interface can be confusing and can lead to distraction and frustration.

Good user interface is possible if it is designed keeping in mind the following principles:

- 1) Simplicity
- 2) Positioning of Controls
- 3) Consistency
- 4) Aesthetics

The image below is an example of a good user interface design.

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The above said four principles explained:

Simplicity

Simplicity is a key factor when designing a user interface. If a user controls then learning and using that application will be hard. Simplicity should allow the user to complete all the required tasks by the program flow and execution should be kept on mind while designing. unnecessary images that distract the user. The simpler the user interface will be.

Positioning of Controls

Positioning of controls should reflect their importance. Say, for example, an application that has a data-entry form with textboxes, buttons, radio buttons should be positioned in such a way that they are easy to locate and match. The submit button should be placed at the bottom of the form so that when the user can click it straight away. The image above is a perfect example of positioning.



Consistency

The user interface should have a consistent look through out the application. This means that the visual elements used in the application should be consistent during the design process. Before developing an application, we should decide on a consistent visual scheme for the application that will be followed throughout the application. Special cases, for special purposes, using of colors for headings, use of images, etc are exceptions to the rule.

Aesthetics

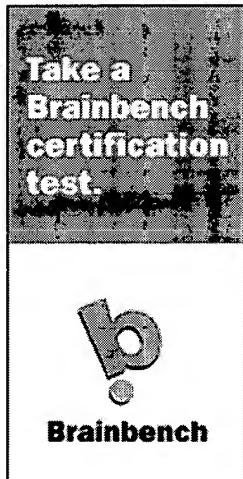
An application should project an inviting and pleasant user interface. The aesthetics of the application should be considered for that.

Color

Use of color is one way to make the user interface attractive to the user. The colors used for text and back-ground should be appealing. Care should be taken not to use colors that are disturbing to the eye, for example, black text on a red back-ground.

Fonts

The fonts which you use for text should also be selected with care. Sans serif fonts like Arial, Verdana, Times New Roman should be used. Try to avoid bold, strike, italic, underline, etc. These should be used sparingly in the application. Use of bold, italics and other formatting should be limited to headings and sub-headings.



Images

Images add visual interest to the application. Simple, plain images are appropriate. Avoid using flashing images and images that are not necessary. Use images to show off the application.

Shapes and Transparency

.NET Framework provides tools that allow us to create forms and controls with transparency. Apart from using traditional shapes like rectangles, etc, these tools also allow us to create our own shapes which can provide some very powerful visual effects. User should use these shapes only if the application requires it and care should be taken that the shapes do not disturb the eye.

The image below is an example of a poorly designed user interface.

Related: Controls

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